
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Advanced Education

MORE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

VICTORIA – The provincial government is enhancing access to post-secondary education for students with permanent disabilities, Advanced Education Murray Coell announced today.

British Columbia signed the Labour Market Agreement (correction made May 9, 2008 – this originally was cited as the Labour Market Development Agreement) with the Government of Canada on Feb. 20, 2008, which included an allocation of \$12 million over six years to benefit persons with disabilities. The funding will help create programs to increase opportunities for post-secondary education and training that will support people with disabilities in finding employment and furthering their careers.

“The provincial government is committed to building the best system of support in Canada for people with disabilities,” said Coell. “Access to post-secondary education and training plays a big role in helping people with disabilities find employment and pursue fulfilling careers.”

The Ministry of Advanced Education has worked closely with the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance to develop new initiatives to help with the challenges of attaining a post-secondary education for students with permanent disabilities.

“Helping students with disabilities get the skills they need to succeed supports the Government’s Disability Strategy to make British Columbia a leader in Canada as a place where all people live the life they choose,” said Claude Richmond, Minister of Employment and Income Assistance.

A ministry disability coordinator has been established to ensure better alignment of programs and services for students with disabilities. In addition, the Assistance Program for Students with Permanent Disabilities will be expanded to include students attending private post-secondary institutions within B.C. This program provides financial assistance to students who face disability-related costs that pose a barrier to post-secondary education.

A \$6.6 million Supplemental Bursary program for Students with Disabilities also has been created to help with these higher costs.

For students with learning disabilities, an assessment is often a necessary prerequisite to receiving the support and services necessary to excel at the post-secondary level. The cost of an assessment can range from \$1,200 to \$1,800. A Learning Disability Assessment Bursary is also under development that will assist students who do not have the resources to pay for the costs of a learning disability assessment.

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To ensure the full benefits of these new programs are realized, the Ministry of Advanced Education has been working with other ministries, post-secondary institutions and stakeholders to do a better job communicating with students and their parents within the K-12 system on the availability of funding for students with permanent disabilities enrolling in post-secondary studies.

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